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**Onscreen user documentation**

1. What is the nature of onscreen user documentation?

Onscreen user documentation is information provided to give guidance to the user of how to use a product and its features with the design focusing on being provided as a soft copy on screen of an electronic device.

1. List the 3 functions of onscreen user documentation?

The 3 key functions of onscreen user documentation include;

* Providing instructions on accessing and using features of new program or devices or features that may be unfamiliar to the user.
* Information for a user in a workplace on the companies procedures or policies on the information system.
* Problem solving for feature or none essential features of the product (further problem solving may be achieved if accessible outside of the program or device)

**Types of onscreen user documentation:**

1. User guides and instruction manuals
   1. What are the purpose of these guides?

The purpose of these guides is to inform and instruct the user about the characteristics, capabilities and functions of the hardware or software. Generally it will be about how to start using it and/or how to user common actions with the product as well as safety warnings.

* 1. What are the two popular formats for onscreen user guides? Why?

The two main popular formats of onscreen user guides are as a PDF (Portable Document Format) or as a Hypertext document (browser based). The reason for the commonness of these centres around the fact that they are relatively small in file size while still allowing for the inclusion of text and images. Additionally users can read a read-only verson with free and relatively common software.

* 1. What is a third party user guide?

A third party user guide is generally a unofficial or secondary source for information about the item in question, for example it may be a book published separate to the required or original developers.

Describe the characteristics of the following types of onscreen user documentation.

1. Quick start guides

Quick start guides provide information for the ‘first time’ users or inexperienced users of a said product. Generally they will give brief, simple instructions on how to begin to use the product as well as safety advice. Additionally they will generally be brief with screenshots included for added clarification.

1. In-house user documentation

In-house user documentation is generally guides or manuals for use by a company’s employees or clients including often protocols (security, file naming, information obtainment) to follow in a programs use or interactions and are often found on the intranets.

1. Read me files

Readme files are provided by the manufacturer with the hardware or software products. They contain important information for users, such as system requirements, configuration settings for the product, troubleshooting tips, support contacts, information about support updates.

1. Tutorials

A tutorial consists of step by step instructions for using the features of a product (essential or just for full utilisation) presented either through a multimedia methods such as videos or through a printable equivalent with screenshots. These may be provided by multiple ways depending on the developers choice.

1. Help files

Help files provide searchable information about the features and functions of a software application or a device. Help files can be extensive in nature often including multiple levels of information in either a drop menu structure or as a simplified version. Additional information such as a glossary of terms may likewise be included.

1. Web support

Web support is onscreen documentation for hardware or software products that can be found directly from the manufactures website with often a hyperlink provided from within the program to said page. Common information here includes but isn’t limited to; FAQ’s (Frequently Asked Questions), knowledge base on the product, troubleshooting information, upgrade information, additional files for content or bug fixs. There may also be a intergrated forum or link to one in relation to the product.

1. Tool tips & hint boxes

Tool tips & hint boxes are a form of onscreen user documentation, providing content sensitive help.

A tool tip is with the application with a mouse hover initiating the event to cause a textbox to appear with information and name or the function of the button.

A hint box is similarly with the application, caused by a click prompt causing a textbox to appear with a short description of the function. These can often be turn off If required by the user if not needed due to experience level